Weaker Section based on Economic Criteria with a focus on coaching candidates belonging to Minorities and Socially and Educaionally Backward Classes. The scheme is being implemented through National and State level proffessional coaching institutions of repute having expertise in the field. During 1994-95, a grant-in-aid of Rs. 1.50 crores was sanctioned to 60 coaching Centres to 3600 candidates.

Programmes to reduce alcoholism

4293. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of WELFARE be please to state:

(a) whether Government of India would cooperate with State Governments to initiate programmes to reduce alcoholism;

(b) what kind of cooperation would be extended by Government of India in this regard;

(c) whether any schemes are already in force in this regard; and

(d) if so, the deatils thereof?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI SITARAM KESRI): (a) and (b) Prohibition being a State subject it is for the State Governments to take necessary action to implement Prohibition. The Government of India, however, acts as a catalyst in parsuading the State Governments to take meaningful and effective steps in the direction of introduction of Prohibition. In addition funds are being given to the NGOs to undertake various programmes all over the country to combat alcoholism and drug abuse.

(c) and (d) Ministry of Welfare admnisiters a Scheme of Assistance for Prohibition and Drug Abuse Prevention. Under the Scheme financial assistance is provided to the extent of 90 per cent of the total approved expenditure to NGOs for undertaking various programmes against alcoholism and drug abuse. The programmes include providing of Counselling, Treatment and Rehabilitation Services to the alcoholics and also for undertaking programmes for creating awareness among the masses about the ill effects of alcoholism and drug abuse. During 1994-95, an amount of Rs. 13.66 crores was spent under the Scheme for carrying out various activities in the States/Uts.

RULING BY CHAIRMAN—

Reg. Grant of permission to a member to put a starred question standing in the name of an absent member

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, I have to make an announcement. The Starred Question No. 321 tabled by Shrimati Veena Verma and Shri Sushilkumar Sambhajirao Shinde, Members of the Rajya Sabha, stood in the List of Questions for Oral Answers on the 26th April, 1995. When I called the questioners, they were absent. At that stage, some Members submitted that I should request the hon. Minister of Home Affairs to reply to the question. Some points were raised for and against, the interruption or the provisions of Rule 54(3) and Rule 55, which deal with the question of absent Members. I had promised to consider the matter and give my ruling. I have since gone through our rules and precedents. I find that on 22nd July, 1952, which is the earliest precedent on the matter. The members in whose name a question was listed, was not present and another Member sought the permission of the then hon. Chairman, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan to put the question on behalf of the Member in whose name the question stood in the List of Questions for Oral Answers. This was permitted and supplementary questions were asked and answered.